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THE

CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM

OF

CHURCH DISCIPLINE,

GATHERED OUT OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND AGREED UPON BY

THE ELDERS AND MESSENGERS OF THE CHURCHES
ASSEMBLED IN SYNOD,

1648.

Congreg. Churches

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EXTRACTS FROM THE PREFACE.

The more we discern the unkind, and unbrotherly, and unchristian contentions of our godly brethren and countrymen in matters of church government, the more earnestly do we desire to see them join together in one common faith, and ourselves with them. For this end, having perused the public Confession of Faith, agreed upon by the reverend assembly of divines at Westminster, and finding the sum and substance thereof, in matters of doctrine, to express not their own judgments only, but ours also; and being likewise called upon by our godly magistrates, to draw up a public confession of that faith which is constantly taught, and generally professed amongst us; we thought good to present unto them, and with them to our churches, and with them to all the churches of Christ abroad, our professed and hearty assent and attestation to the whole Confession of Faith (for substance of doctrine) which the reverend assembly presented to the religious and honorable parliament of England: excepting only some sections which concern points of controversy in church discipline; touching which we refer ourselves to the draft of church discipline in the ensuing treatise.

The truth of what we here declare may appear by the unanimous vote of the Synod of the Elders and Messengers of our churches, assembled at Cambridge, the last of the sixth month, 1648, which jointly passed in these words: This synod having perused and considered, with much gladness of heart, and thankfulness to God, the Confession of Faith, published of late by the reverend assembly in England, do judge it to be very

holy, orthodox, and judicious in all matters of faith; and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto, for the substance thereof. Only in those things which have respect to church government and discipline, we refer ourselves to the Platform of Church Discipline, agreed upon by this present assembly; and do therefore think it meet, that this Confession of Faith should be commended to the churches of Christ amongst us, and to the honored court, as worthy of their due consideration and acceptance.

The Lord Jesus commune with all our hearts in secret, and he who is the king of his church, let him be pleased to exercise his kingly power in our spirits, that so his kingdom may come into our churches in purity and peace. Amen.

PLATFORM.

CHAPTER I.

Of the form of church government; and that it is one, immutable, and prescribed in the word.

1. Ecclesiastical polity, or church government or discipline, is nothing else but that form and order that is to be observed in the church of Christ upon earth, both for the constitution of it, and all the administrations that therein are to be performed.

Ezek. xliii. 11. Col. ii. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 15.

2. Church government is considered in a double respect, either in regard of the parts of government themselves, or necessary circumstances thereof. The parts of government are prescribed in the word, because the Lord Jesus Christ, the king and lawgiver of his church, is no less faithful in the house of God than was Moses, who from the Lord delivered a form and pattern of government to the children of Israel in the Old Testament: and the holy Scriptures are now also so perfect, as they are able to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work; and therefore doubtless to the well ordering of the house of God.

Heb. iii. 5, 6. Exod. xxv. 40. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

3. The parts of church government are all of them exactly described in the word of God, being parts or means of instituted worship, according to the second commandment, and therefore to continue one and the same unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a kingdom that cannot be shaken, until he shall deliver it

up unto God, even the Father. So that it is not left in the power of men, officers, churches, or any state in the world to add, or diminish, or alter any thing in the least measure therein.

1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Chron. xv. 13. Ex. xx. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 13, 16. Heb. xii. 27, 28. 1 Cor. xv. 24. Deut. xii. 32. Ezek. xliii. 8. 1 Kings, xii. 31–33.

4. The necessary circumstances, as time and place, &c., belonging unto order and decency, are not so left unto men, as that under pretence of them they may thrust their own inventions upon the churches, being circumscribed in the word with many general limitations, where they are determined in respect of the matter, to be neither worship itself, nor circumstances separable from worship. In respect of their end, they must be done unto edification. In respect of the manner, decently and in order, according to the nature of the things themselves, and civil and church custom. Doth not even nature itself teach you? Yea, they are in some sort determined particularly, namely, that they be done in such a manner, as, all circumstances considered, is most expedient for edification: so, as if there be no error of man concerning their determination, the determining of them is to be accounted as if it were divine.

2 Kings, xii Ex xx. 19. Isa. xxviii. 13. Col. i. 22, 23. Acts, xv. 28. Matt. xv. 9. 1 Cor. xi. 23, and viii. 34. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, and xiv. 40, and xi. 14, 16, and xiv. 12, 19. Acts, xv. 28.

CHAPTER II.

Of the nature of the catholic church in general, and in special of a particular visible church.

1. The catholic church is the whole company of those that are elected, redeemed, and in time effectually called from the state of sin and death, unto a state of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ.

Eph. i. 22, 23, and v. 25, 26, 30. Heb. xii. 23.

2. This church is either triumphant, or militant. Triumphant, the number of them who are glorified in

heaven: militant, the number of them who are conflicting with their enemies upon earth.

Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 12, and iv. 8. Eph. vi. 12, 13.

3. This militant church is to be considered as invisible, and visible. Invisible, in respect of their relation wherein they stand to Christ, as a body unto the head, being united unto him by the Spirit of God, and faith in their hearts. Visible, in respect of the profession of their faith, in their persons, and in particular churches. And so there may be acknowledged an universal visible church.

2 Tim. ii. 19. Rev. ii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iii. 17. Rom. i. 8. 1 Thess. i. 8. Isa. ii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 12.

4. The members of the militant visible church, considered either as not yet in church-order, or as walking according to the church-order of the gospel. In order, and so besides the spiritual union and communion common to all believers, they enjoy moreover an union and communion ecclesiastical-political. So we deny an universal visible church.

Acts, xix. 1. Col. ii. 5. Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 12.

5. The state of the members of the militant visible church walking in order, was either before the law, economical, that is in families; or under the law, national; or since the coming of Christ, only congregational: (The term independent we approve not.) Therefore neither national, provincial nor classical.

Gen. xviii. 19. Exod. xix. 6.

6. A Congregational church is by the institution of Christ a part of the militant visible church, consisting of a company of saints by calling, united into one body by a holy covenant, for the public worship of God, and the mutual edification one of another, in the fellowship of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. xiv. 23, 36, and i. 2, and xii. 27. Exod. xix. 5, 6. Deut. xxix. 1, and 9 to 15. Acts, ii. 42. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

CHAPTER III.

Of the matter of the visible church, both in respect of quality and quantity.

1. The matter of a visible church are saints by calling. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1.

2. By saints, we understand, 1. Such as have not only attained the knowledge of the principles of religion, and are free from gross and open scandals, but also do together with the profession of their faith and repentance, walk in blameless obedience to the word, so as that in charitable discretion they may be accounted saints by calling, though perhaps some or more of them be unsound, and hypocrites inwardly, because the members of such particular churches are commonly by the Holy Ghost called saints and faithful brethren in Christ; and sundry churches have been reproved for receiving, and suffering such persons to continue in fellowship amongst them, as have been offensive and scandalous; the name of God also by this means is blasphemed, and the holy things of God defiled and profaned, the hearts of the godly grieved, and the wicked themselves hardened, and helped forward to damnation. The example of such doth endanger the sanctity of others: a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 2. The children of such, who are also holy.

Heb. vi. 1. 1 Cor. i. 5. Rom. xv. 14. Ps. l. 16, 17. Acts, viii. 37. Matt. iii. 6. Rom vi 17. 1 Cor. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Col. i 2. Eph. i. 1. 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. Ezek. xliv. 7, 9, and xxiii. 38, 39. Num. xix. 20. Hag. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. Psal. xxxvii. 21. 1 Cor. v. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

3. The members of churches, though orderly constituted, may in time degenerate, and grow corrupt and scandalous, which though they ought not to be tolerated in the church, yet their continuance therein, through the defect of the execution of discipline and just censures, doth not immediately dissolve the being of the church, as appears in the church of Israel, and the churches of Galatia and Corinth, Pergamus and Thyatira.

Jer. ii. 21. 1 Cor. v. 12. Jer. ii. 4. Gal. v. 4. 2 Cor. xii. 21. Rev. ii. 14, 15, and xxi. 21.

4. The matter of the church in respect of its quantity, ought not to be of greater number than may ordinarily meet together conveniently in one place; nor ordinarily fewer, than may conveniently carry on church-work. Hence when the holy Scripture makes mention of the saints combined into a church-estate, in a town or city where was but one congregation, it usually calleth those saints *The Church*, in the singular number; as, The church of the Thessalonians, The church of Smyrna, Philadelphia, and the like; but when it speaketh of the saints in a nation or province, wherein there were sundry congregations, it frequently and usually calleth them by the name of *Churches*, in the plural number, as the churches of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, and the like; which is further confirmed by what is written of sundry of those churches in particular, how they were assembled and met together, the whole church in one place, as the church at Jerusalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Corinth, and Cenchrea, though it were more near to Corinth, it being the port thereof, and answerable to a village, yet being a distinct congregation from Corinth, it had a church of its own, as well as Corinth had.

1 Cor. xiv. 21. Matt. xviii. 17. Rom. xvi 1. 1 Thess. i. 1. Rev. ii. 8, and iii. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19. Gal. i. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 1. 1 Thess. ii. 14. Acts, ii. 46, and v. 12, and vi. 2, and xiv. 27, and xv. 38. 1 Cor. v. 4, and xiv. 23. Rom. xvi. 1.

5. Nor can it with reason be thought but that every church appointed and ordained by Christ, had a ministry ordained and appointed for the same; and yet plain it is, that there were no ordinary officers appointed by Christ for any other than congregational churches; elders being appointed to feed, not all flocks, but that particular flock of God over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, and that flock they must attend, even the whole flock; and one congregation being as much as any ordinary elders can attend, therefore there is no greater church than a congregation, which may ordinarily meet in one place.

Acts, xx. 28.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the form of a visible church, and of church covenant.

1. Saints by calling must have a visible political union amongst themselves, or else they are not yet a particular church, as those similitudes hold forth, which the Scripture makes use of to show the nature of particular churches, as a body, a building, or house, hands, eyes, feet, and other members must be united, or else (remaining separate) are not a body. Stones, timber, though squared, hewn and polished, are not a house, until they are compacted and united; so saints or believers, in judgment of charity, are not a church, unless orderly knit together.

1 Cor. xii. 27. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Eph. ii. 22. 1 Cor. xii. 15, 16, 17.

2. Particular churches cannot be distinguished one from another, but by their forms: Ephesus is not Smyrna, nor Pergamus, Thyatira, but each one a distinct society of itself, having officers of their own, which had not the charge of others; virtues of their own, for which others are not praised; corruptions of their own, for which others are not blamed.

Rev. i.

3. This form is the visible covenant, agreement, or consent, whereby they give up themselves unto the Lord, to the observing of the ordinances of Christ together in the same society, which is usually called the church covenant: For we see not otherwise how members can have church-power one over another mutually. The comparing of each particular church unto a city, and unto a spouse, seemeth to conclude not only a form, but that that form is by way of covenant. The covenant, as it was that which made the family of Abraham, and children of Israel, to be a church and people unto God, so it is that which now makes the several societies of Gentile-believers to be churches in these days.

Exod xix. 5, 8. Deut. xxix. 12, 13. Zech. xi. 14, and ix. 11. Eph. ii. 19. 2 Cor. xi. 2. Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 12, 13. Eph. ii. 12, 19.

4. This voluntary agreement, consent, or covenant, (for all these are here taken for the same,) although the

more express and plain it is, the more fully it puts us in mind of our mutual duty, and stirreth us up to it, and leaveth less room for the questioning of the truth of the church-estate of a company of professors, and the truth of membership of particular persons; yet we conceive the substance of it is kept, where there is a real agreement and consent of a company of faithful persons to meet constantly together in one congregation, for the public worship of God, and their mutual edification; which real agreement and consent they do express by their constant practice in coming together for the public worship of God, and by their religious subjection unto the ordinances of God there; the rather if we do consider how Scripture-covenants have been entered into not only expressly by word of mouth, but by sacrifice, by hand writing and seal, and also sometimes by silent consent, without any writing or expression of words at all.

Exod. xix 5, and xx. 8, and xxiv. 3, 17. Josh. xxiv. 18–24. Psalm l. 5. Neh. ix. 38, and x. 1. Gen. xvii. Deut. xxix.

5. This form being by mutual covenant, it followeth, it is not faith in the heart, nor the profession of that faith, nor cohabitation, nor baptism. 1. Not faith in the heart, because that is invisible. 2. Not a bare profession, because that declareth them no more to be members of one church than of another. 3. Not cohabitation: atheists or infidels may dwell together with believers. 4. Not baptism, because it presupposeth a church-estate, as circumcision in the Old Testament, which gave no being unto the church, the church being before it, and in the wilderness without it. Seals presuppose a covenant already in being. One person is a complete subject of baptism, but one person is incapable of being a church.

6. All believers ought, as God giveth them opportunity thereunto, to endeavor to join themselves unto a particular church, and that in respect of the honor of Jesus Christ, in his example and institution, by the professed acknowledgment of, and subjection unto the order and ordinances of the gospel; as also in respect of their good of communion, founded upon their visible union, and contained in the promises of Christ's special presence in the church; whence they have fellowship with him, and in him one with another; also, for the keeping of them in the way of

God's commandments, and recovering of them in case of wandering, (which all Christ's sheep are subject to in this life,) being unable to return of themselves; together with the benefit of their mutual edification, and of their posterity, that they may not be cut off from the privileges of the covenant. Otherwise, if a believer offends, he remains destitute of the remedy provided in that behalf. And should all believers neglect this duty of joining to all particular congregations, it might follow thereupon, that Christ should have no visible political churches upon earth.

Acts, ii. 47, and ix. 26. Matt. iii. 13, 14, 15, and xxviii. 19, 20. Psalm cxxxiii. 2, 3, and lxxxvii. 7. Matt. xviii. 20 1 John, i. 3. Ps. cxix. 176. 1 Peter, ii. 25. Eph. iv. 16. John, xxii. 24, 25. Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

CHAPTER V.

Of the first subject of church power; or, to whom church power doth first belong.

The first subject of church power is either supreme or subordinate and ministerial; the supreme, by way of gift from the Father, is the Lord Jesus Christ: The ministerial is either extraordinary as the apostles, prophets and evangelists; or ordinary, as every particular Congregational church.

Mat. xviii. 18. Rev. iii. 7. Isa. ix. 6. John xx. 21, 23. 1 Cor. xiv. 32. Tit. i. 5. 1 Cor. v. 12.

2. Ordinary church power, is either the power of office, that is, such as is proper to the eldership, or power of privilege, such as belongs unto the brotherhood. The latter, is in the brethren formally, and immediately from Christ, that is, so as it may be acted or exercised immediately by themselves; the former is not in them formally or immediately, and therefore cannot be acted or exercised immediately by them, but is said to be in them, in that they design the persons unto office, who only are to act, or to exercise this power.

Rom. xii. 4, 8. Acts i. 23, and vi. 3, 4, and xiv. 23. 1 Cor. x. 29, 30.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the officers of the church, and especially of pastors and teachers.

1. A CHURCH being a company of people combined together by covenant for the worship of God, it appeareth thereby, that there may be the essence and being of a church without any officers, seeing there is both the form and matter of a church; which is implied when it is said, the apostles ordained elders in every church.

Acts, xiv. 23.

2. Nevertheless, though officers be not absolutely necessary to the simple being of churches, when they be called, yet ordinarily to their calling they are, and to their well being; and therefore the Lord Jesus, out of his tender compassion, hath appointed and ordained officers, which he would not have done, if they had not been useful and needful for the church; yea, being ascended into heaven, he received gifts for men, and gave gifts to men, whereof officers for the church are justly accounted no small parts, they being to continue to the end of the world, and for the perfecting of all the saints.

Rom. x. 17. Jer. iii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Psalm lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8, 11. and iv. 12, 13.

3. These officers were either extraordinary or ordinary: extraordinary, as apostles, prophets, evangelists; ordinary, as elders and deacons. The apostles, prophets, and evangelists as they were called extraordinarily by Christ, so their office ended with themselves; whence it is that Paul directing Timothy how to carry along church-administrations, giveth no direction about the choice or course of apostles, prophets, or evangelists, but only of elders and deacons; and when Paul was to take his last leave of the church of Ephesus, he committed the care of feeding the church to no other, but unto the elders of that church. The like charge doth Peter commit to the elders.

1 Cor. xii 28. Eph. iv. 11. Acts, viii. 6, 16. 19, and xi. 28. Rom. xi. 13. 1 Cor. iv. 9. 1 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 8 to 13. Tit. i. 5. Acts, xx. 17, 28. 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.

4. Of elders, who are also in scripture called bishops, some attend chiefly to the ministry of the word, as the pastors and teachers; others attend especially unto rule, who are therefore called ruling elders.

1 Tim. ii. 3. Phil. i. 1. Acts, xx. 17, 28. 1 Tim. v. 7.

5. The office of pastor and teacher, appears to be distinct. The pastor's special work is, to attend to exhortation, and therein to administer a word of wisdom; the teacher is to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge; and either of them to administer the seals of that covenant, unto the dispensation whereof they are alike called; as also to execute the censures, being but a kind of application of the word: The preaching of which, together with the application thereof, they are alike charged withal.

Eph. iv. 11. Rom. xii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. xii. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Titus, i. 9.

6. And forasmuch as both pastors and teachers are given by Christ for the perfecting of the saints, and edifying of his body; which saints and body of Christ is his church: therefore we account pastors and teachers to be both of them church officers, and not the pastor for the church, and the teacher only for the schools: Though this we gladly acknowledge, that schools are both lawful, profitable and necessary for the training up of such in good literature or learning, as may afterwards be called forth unto office of pastor or teacher in the church.

Eph. iv. 11, 12. and i. 22, 23. 1 Sam. x. 12, 19, 20. 2 Kings, ii. 3, 15.

CHAPTER VII.

Of ruling elders and deacons.

1. The ruling elder's office is distinct from the office of pastor and teacher. The ruling elders are not so called, to exclude the pastors and teachers from ruling, because ruling and governing is common to these with the other; whereas attending to teach and preach the word is peculiar unto the former.

Rom. xii. 7, 8, 9. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Tim. v. 17.

2. The ruling elder's work is to join with the pastor and teacher in those acts of spiritual rule which are distinct from the ministry of the word and sacraments committed to them. Of which sort these be as followeth: 1. To open and shut the doors of God's house, by the admission of members approved by the church; by ordination of officers chosen by the church; and by excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders renounced by the church; and by restoring of penitents forgiven by the church. 2. To call the church together when there is occasion, and seasonably to dismiss them again. 3. To prepare matters in private, that in public they may be carried to an end with less trouble, and more speedy dispatch. 4. To moderate the carriage of all matters in the church assembled; as, to propound matters to the church, to order the season of speech and silence, and to pronounce sentence according to the mind of Christ, with the consent of the church. 5. To be guides and leaders to the church, in all matters whatsoever pertaining to church-administrations and actions. 6. To see that none in the church live inordinately, out of rank and place, without a calling, or idly in their calling. 7. To prevent and heal such offences in life or in doctrine, as might corrupt the church. 8. To feed the flock of God with a word of admonition. 9. And as they shall be sent for, to visit and to pray over their sick brethren. 10. And at other times as opportunity shall serve thereunto.

1 Tim. v. 17. 2 Chron. xxiii. 19. Rev. xxi. 12 1 Tim. iv. 14. Mat. xviii. 17. 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8. Acts, ii. 6, and xxi. 18, 22, 23, and vi. 2, 3, and xiii. 15. 2 Cor. viii. 19. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12. Acts, xx. 28, 32. 1 Thess. v. 12. James, v. 14. Acts, xx. 20.

3. The office of a deacon is instituted in the church by the Lord Jesus; sometimes they are called helps. The scripture telleth us how they should be qualified, "Grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not given to filthy lucre." They must first be proved, and then use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. The office and work of the deacon, is to receive the offerings of the church, gifts given to the church, and to keep the treasury of the church, and therewith to serve the tables which the church is to provide for; as the Lord's table,

the table of the ministers, and of such as are in necessity, to whom they are to distribute in simplicity.

Acts, vi. 3, 6. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 8, 9. Acts, iv. 35, and vi. 2, 3. Rom. xii. 8.

4. The office therefore being limited unto the care of the temporal good things of the church, it extends not unto the attendance upon, and administration of the spiritual things thereof, as the word and sacraments, or the like.

1 Cor. vii. 17.

5. The ordinance of the apostle, and practice of the church, commends the Lord's day as a fit time for the contributions of the saints.

1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, 3.

6. The instituting of all these officers in the church, is the work of God himself, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost: and therefore such officers as he hath not appointed are altogether unlawful either to be placed in the church, or to be retained therein, and are to be looked at as human creatures, mere inventions and appointments of man, to the great dishonor of Christ Jesus, the Lord of his house, the king of his church, whether popes, patriarchs, cardinals, arch-bishops, lord-bishops, arch-deacons, officials, commissaries, and the like. These and the rest of that hierarchy and retinue, not being plants of the Lord's planting, shall all be certainly rooted out and cast forth.

1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 8, 11. Acts, xx. 28. Mat. xv. 13.

7. The Lord hath appointed ancient widows, where they may be had, to minister in the church, in giving attendance to the sick, and to give succour unto them, and others in the like necessities.

1 Tim. v. 9, 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the election of church officers.

1. No man may take the honor of a church officer unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Heb. v. 4.

2. Calling unto office is either immediate, by Christ himself, such was the call of the apostles and prophets; this manner of calling ended with them as hath been said: or mediate, by the church.

Gal. i. 1. Acts, xiv. 23, and vi. 3.

3. It is meet that before any be ordained or chosen officers, they should first be tried and proved; because hands are not suddenly to be laid upon any, and both elders and deacons must be of honest and good report.

1 Tim. v. 22, and vii. 10. Acts, xvi. 2, and vi. 3.

4. The things in respect of which they are to be tried, are those gifts and virtues which the scripture requireth in men that are to be elected into such places, viz. that elders must be blameless, sober, apt to teach, and endued with such other qualifications as are laid down, 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 6 to 9. Deacons to be fitted as is directed, Acts, vi. 3. 1 Tim. iii. 8 to 11.

5. Officers are to be called by such churches whereunto they are to minister. Of such moment is the preservation of this power, that the churches exercised it in the presence of the apostles.

Acts, xiv. 23, and i. 23, and vi. 3, 4, 5.

6. A church being free, cannot become subject to any, but by a free election; yet when such a people do choose any to be over them in the Lord, then do they become subject, and most willingly submit to their ministry in the Lord, whom they have so chosen.

Gal. v. 13. Heb xiii. 17.

7. And if the church have power to choose their officers and ministers, then in case of manifest unworthiness and delinquency, they have power also to depose them: for to open and shut, to choose and refuse, to constitute in office and remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power.

Rom. xvi. 17.

8. We judge it much conducing to the well being and communion of churches, that where it may conveniently be done, neighbour churches be advised withal, and their

help made use of in the trial of church officers, in order to their choice.

Cant. viii. 8, 9.

9. The choice of such church officers belongeth not to the civil magistrates, as such, or diocesan bishops, or patrons; for of these, or any such like, the Scripture is wholly silent, as having any power therein.

CHAPTER IX.

Of ordination, and imposition of hands.

1. Church officers are not only to be chosen by the church, but also to be ordained by imposition of hands and prayer; with which, at the ordination of elders, fasting also is to be joined.

Acts, xiii. 3, and xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 22.

2. This ordination we account nothing else, but the solemn putting of a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election; being like the installing of a magistrate in the commonwealth. Ordination therefore is not to go before, but to follow election. The essence and substance of the outward calling of an ordinary officer in the church, doth not consist in his ordination, but in his voluntary and free election by the church, and in his accepting of that election; whereupon is founded that relation between pastor and flock, between such a minister and such a people. Ordination doth not constitute an officer, nor give him the essentials of his office. The apostles were elders without imposition of hands by men; Paul and Barnabas were officers before that imposition of hands, Acts, xiii. 3. The posterity of Levi were priests and Levites, before hands were laid on them by the children of Israel.

Numb. viii. 10. Acts, vi. 5, 6, and xiii. 2, 3, and xiv. 23.

3. In such churches where there are elders, imposition of hands in ordination is to be performed by those elders.

1 Tim. iv. 14. Acts, xiii. 3. 1 Tim. v. 22.

4. In such churches where there are no elders, imposition of hands may be performed by some of the brethren orderly chosen by the church thereunto. For if the people may elect officers, which is the greater, and wherein the substance of the office consists, they may much more (occasion and need so requiring) impose hands in ordination, which is less, and but the accomplishment of the other.

Numb. viii. 10.

5. Nevertheless, in such churches where there are no elders, and the church so desire, we see not why imposition of hands may not be performed by the elders of other churches. Ordinary officers laid hands upon the officers of many churches: the presbytery at Ephesus laid hands upon Timothy, an evangelist; the presbytery at Antioch laid hands upon Paul and Barnabas.

1 Tim. iv. 14. Acts, xiii. 3.

6. Church officers are officers to one church, even that particular church over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. Insomuch as elders are commanded to feed, not all flocks, but that flock which is committed to their faith and trust, and dependeth upon them. Nor can constant residence at one congregation be necessary for a minister, no, nor yet lawful, if he be not a minister to one congregation only, but to the church universal; because he may not attend one part only of the church whereto he is a minister, but he is called to attend unto all the flock.

1 Pet. v. 2. Acts, xx. 28.

7. He that is clearly loosed from his office-relation unto that church whereof he was a minister, cannot be looked at as an officer, nor perform any act of office in any other church, unless he be again orderly called unto office; which when it shall be, we know nothing to hinder, but imposition of hands also in his ordination ought to be used towards him again. For so Paul the apostle received imposition of hands twice at least from Ananias.

Acts, ix. 17, and xiii. 3.

CHAPTER X.

Of the power of the church and its presbytery.

1. Supreme and lordly power over all the churches upon earth doth only belong unto Jesus Christ, who is king of the church, and the head thereof. He hath the government upon his shoulders, and hath all power given to him, both in heaven and earth.

Psalm ii. 6. Eph. i. 21, 22. Isa. ix. 6. Matt. xxviii. 18.

2. A company of professed believers ecclesiastically confederate, as they are a church before they have officers, and without them; so even in that estate, subordinate church-power under Christ, delegated to them by him, doth belong to them, in such a manner as is before expressed, chap. v. sect. 2, and as flowing from the very nature and essence of a church: it being natural to all bodies, and so unto a church body, to be furnished with sufficient power for its own preservation and subsistence.

Acts, i. 23, and xiv. 23, and vi. 3, 4. Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

3. This government of the church is a mixt government, and so hath been acknowledged long before the term of independency was heard of. In respect of Christ, the head and King of the church, and the sovereign power residing in him, and exercised by him, it is a monarchy; in respect of the body or brotherhood of the church, and power from Christ granted unto them, it resembles a democracy; in respect of the presbytery, and power committed unto them, it is an aristocracy.

Rev iii. 7. 1 Cor. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17.

4. The sovereign power which is peculiar unto Christ, is exercised, 1. In calling the church out of the world into holy fellowship with himself. 2. In instituting the ordinances of his worship, and appointing his ministers and officers for the dispensing of them. 3. In giving laws for the ordering of all our ways, and the ways of his house. 4. In giving power and life to all his institutions, and to his people by them. 5. In protecting and

delivering his church against and from all the enemies of their peace.

Gal i. 4. Rev. v. 8, 9. Matt xxviii. 20. Eph. iv. 8, 11. James, iv. 12. Isa. xxxiii. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Isa. xxxii. 2. Luke, i. 71.

5. The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood, is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exercise, 1. In choosing their own officers, whether elders or deacons. 2. In admission of their own members; and therefore there is great reason they should have power to remove any from their fellowship again. Hence in case of offence, any brother hath power to convince and admonish an offending brother; and in case of not hearing him, to take one or two more to set on the admonition; and in case of not hearing them, to proceed to tell the church; and as his offence may require, the whole church hath power to proceed to the public censure of him, whether by admonition or excommunication; and upon his repentance, to restore him again unto his former communion.

Acts, vi 3, 5, and xiv. 23, and ix. 26. Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. Tit. iii. 10. Col. iv. 17. 2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

6. In case an elder offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power according to order (the council of other churches, where it may be had, directing thereto) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he add contumacy to his sin, the church that had power to receive him into their fellowship, hath also the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other member.

Col. iv. 17. Rom. xvi. 17. Matt. xviii. 17.

7. Church government or rule, is placed by Christ in the officers of the church, who are therefore called rulers, while they rule with God; yet in case of maladministration, they are subject to the power of the church, as hath been said before. The Holy Ghost frequently, yea always, where it mentioneth church rule, and church government, ascribeth it to elders; whereas the work and duty of the people is expressed in the phrase of obeying their elders, and submitting themselves unto them in the Lord. So as it is manifest, that an organic or complete

church is a body politic, consisting of some that are governors, and some that are governed in the Lord.

1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

8. The power which Christ hath committed to the elders, is to feed and rule the church of God, and accordingly to call the church together upon any weighty occasion; when the members so called, without just cause, may not refuse to come; nor when they are come, depart before they are dismissed; nor speak in the church before they have leave from the elders; nor continue so doing when they require silence; nor may they oppose nor contradict the judgment or sentence of the elders, without sufficient and weighty cause, because such practices are manifestly contrary unto order and government, and inlets of disturbance, and tend to confusion.

Acts, xx. 28, and vi. 2. Numb. xvi. 12. Ezek. xlvi. 10. Acts, xiii. 15. Hos. iv. 4.

9. It belongs also unto the elders to examine any officers or members, before they be received of the church; to receive the accusations brought to the church, and to prepare them for the church's hearing. In handling of offences and other matters before the church, they have power to declare and publish the council and will of God touching the same, and to pronounce sentence with consent of the church. Lastly, they have power, when they dismiss the people, to bless them in the name of the Lord.

Rev. ii. 2. 1 Tim. v. 19. Acts, xxi. 18, 22, 23. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. Num. vi. 23 to 26.

10. This power of government in the elders, doth not any wise prejudice the power of privilege in the brotherhood; as neither the power of privilege in the brethren, doth prejudice the power of government in the elders, but they may sweetly agree together; as we may see in the example of the apostles, furnished with the greatest church power, who took in the concurrence and consent of the brethren in church administrations. Also that scripture, 2 Cor. ii. 9, and x. 6, do declare, That what the churches were to act and do in these matters, they were to do in a way of obedience, and that not only to

the direction of the apostles, but also of their ordinary elders.

Acts, xiv. 15, 23, and vi. 2. 1 Cor. v. 4. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. Heb. xiii. 17.

11. From the premises, namely, That the ordinary power of government belonging only to the elders, power of privilege remaineth with the brotherhood, (as power of judgment in matters of censure, and power of liberty in matters of liberty;) it followeth, that in an organic church, and right administration, all church acts proceed after the manner of a mixt administration, so as no church act can be consummated or perfected without the consent of both.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the maintenance of church officers.

1. The apostle concludes, that necessary and sufficient maintenance is due unto the ministers of the word, from the law of nature and nations, from the law of Moses, the equity thereof, as also the rule of common reason. Moreover, the scripture doth not only call elders laborers, and workmen, but also speaking of them, doth say, that the laborer is worthy of his hire; and requires that he which is taught in the word, should communicate to him in all good things; and mentions it as an ordinance of the Lord, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel; and forbiddeth the muzzling of the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.

1 Cor. ix. 14, 15. Matt. ix. 38, and x. 10. 1 Tim. v. 18. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 9, 14.

2. The scriptures alledged, requiring this maintenance as a bounden duty and due debt, and not as a matter of alms and free gift, therefore people are not at liberty to do or not to do, what and when they please in this matter, no more than in any other commanded duty, and ordinance of the Lord; but ought of duty to minister of their carnal things, to them that labor amongst them in the word and doctrine, as well as they ought to pay any other

workmen their wages, and to discharge and satisfy their other debts, or to submit themselves to observe any other ordinance of the Lord.

Rom. xv 27. 1 Cor. ix. 21.

3. The apostle (Gal. vi. 6.) enjoining that he which is taught communicate to him that teacheth in all good things, doth not leave it arbitrary, what or how much a man shall give, or in what proportion, but even the latter, as well as the former, is prescribed and appointed by the Lord.

1 Cor. xvi. 2.

4. Not only members of churches, but all that are taught in the word, are to contribute unto him that teacheth, in all good things. In case that congregations are defective in their contributions, the deacons are to call upon them to do their duty; if their call sufficeth not, the church by her power is to require it of their members; and where church power, through the corruption of men, doth not, or cannot attain the end, the magistrate is to see the ministry be duly provided for, as appears from the commended example of Nehemiah. The magistrates are nursing-fathers, and nursing-mothers, and stand charged with the custody of both tables; because it is better to prevent a scandal that it may not come, and easier also, than to remove it when it is given. It is most suitable to rule, that by the church's care each man should know his proportion according to rule, what he should do, before he do it, that so his judgment and heart may be satisfied in what he doth, and just offence prevented in what is done.

Gal. vi. 6. Acts, vi. 3, 4. Neh. xiii. 11. Isa. xlix. 23. 2 Cor. viii. 13, 14.

CHAPTER XII.

Of admission of members into the church.

1. The doors of the churches of Christ upon earth, do not by God's appointment stand so wide open, that all

sorts of people, good or bad, may freely enter therein at their pleasure; but such as are admitted thereto as members, ought to be examined and tried first, whether they be fit and meet to be received into church-society, or not. The eunuch of Ethiopia, before his admission, was examined by Philip, whether he did believe on Jesus Christ with all his heart. The angel of the church at Ephesus is commended for trying such as said they were apostles, and were not. There is like reason for trying of them that profess themselves to be believers. The officers are charged with the keeping of the doors of the church, and therefore are in a special manner to make trial of the fitness of such who enter. Twelve angels are set at the gates of the temple, lest such as were ceremonially unclean should enter thereinto.

2 Chron. xxiii. 19. Matt. xiii. 25, and xxii. 12. Acts, viii. 37. Rev. ii. 2. Acts, ix. 26. Rev. xxi. 12.

2. The things which are requisite to be found in all church members, are *repentance* from sin, and *faith* in Jesus Christ; and therefore these are the things whereof men are to be examined at their admission into the church, and which then they must profess and hold forth in such sort, as may satisfy rational charity that the things are there indeed. John Baptist admitted men to baptism, confessing and bewailing their sins; and of others it is said, that they came, and confessed and showed their deeds.

Acts, ii. 38 to 42, and viii. 37. Matt. iii. 6. Acts, xix. 18.

3. The weakest measure of faith is to be accepted in those that desire to be admitted into the church, because weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that faith, repentance and holiness which is required in church members; and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. The Lord Jesus would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, but gather the tender lambs in his arms and carry them gently in his bosom. Such charity and tenderness is to be used, as the weakest Christian, if sincere, may not be excluded nor discouraged. Severity of examination is to be avoided.

Rom. xiv. 1. Matt. xii. 20. Isa. xl. 11.

4. In case any through excessive fear, or other infirmity, be unable to make their personal relation of their spiritual estate in public, it is sufficient that the elders, having received private satisfaction, make relation thereof in public before the church, they testifying their assents thereunto; this being the way that tendeth most to edification. But where persons are of greater abilities, there it is most expedient that they make their relations and confessions personally with their own mouth, as David professeth of himself.

Psalm lxvi. 16.

5. A personal and public confession, and declaring of God's manner of working upon the soul, is both lawful, expedient and useful, in sundry respects, and upon sundry grounds. Those three thousand, Acts ii. 37, 41, before they were admitted by the apostles, did manifest that they were pricked in their hearts at Peter's sermon, together with earnest desire to be delivered from their sins, which now wounded their consciences, and their ready receiving of the word of promise and exhortation. We are to be ready to render a reason of the hope that is in us, to every one that asketh us; therefore we must be able and ready upon any occasion to declare and show our repentance for sin, faith unfeigned, and effectual calling, because these are the reasons of a well grounded hope. I have not hidden thy righteousness from the great congregation.

1 Pet. iii. 15. Heb. xi. 1. Eph. i. 18. Psalm xl. 10.

6. This profession of faith and repentance, as it must be made by such at their admission, that were never in church-society before; so nothing hindereth but the same way also be performed by such as have formerly been members of some other church, and the church to which they now join themselves as members may lawfully require the same. Those three thousand, Acts ii., which made their confession, were members of the church of the Jews before, so were they that were baptized by John. Churches may err in their admission, and persons regularly admitted may fall into offence. Otherwise, if churches might obtrude their members, or if church members might obtrude themselves upon other churches without

due trial, the matter so requiring, both the liberty of churches would hereby be infringed in that they might not examine those, concerning whose fitness for communion they were unsatisfied; and besides the infringing of their liberty, the churches themselves would unavoidably be corrupted, and the ordinances defiled, whilst they might not refuse, but must receive the unworthy; which is contrary unto the scripture, teaching that all churches are sisters, and therefore equal.

Matt iii. 5, 6. Gal. ii. 4. 1 Tim. v. 24. Cant. viii. 8.

7. The like trial is to be required from such members of the church as were born in the same, or received their membership and were baptized in their infancy or minority, by virtue of the covenant of their parents, when being grown up unto years of discretion, they shall desire to be made partakers of the Lord's supper; unto which, because holy things must not be given unto the unworthy, therefore it is requisite, that these as well as others should come to their trial and examination, and manifest their faith and repentance by an open profession thereof, before they are received to the Lord's supper, and otherwise not to be admitted thereunto. Yet these church members that were so born, or received in their childhood, before they are capable of being made partakers of full communion, have many privileges which others, not church members, have not; they are in covenant with God, have the seal thereof upon them, viz. baptism; and so if not regenerated, yet are in a more hopeful way of attaining regenerating grace, and all the spiritual blessings both of the covenant and seal: they are also under church-watch, and consequently subject to the reprehensions, admonitions, and censures thereof, for their healing and amendment, as need shall require.

Matt. vii. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 27.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of church members, their removal from one church to another, and of recommendation and dismission.

1. Church members may not remove or depart from the church, and so one from another as they please, nor without just and weighty cause, but ought to live and dwell together; forasmuch as they are commanded, not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Such departure tends to the dissolution and ruin of the body, as the pulling of stones and pieces of timber from the building, and of members from the natural body, tend to the destrûction of the whole.

Heb. x. 25.

2. It is therefore the duty of church members, in such times and places where counsel may be had, to consult with the church whereof they are members about their removal, that accordingly they having their approbation, may be encouraged, or otherwise desist. They who are joined with consent, should not depart without consent, except forced thereunto.

Prov. xi. 16.

3. If a member's departure be manifestly unsafe and sinful, the church may not consent thereunto; for in so doing, they should not act in faith, and should partake with him in his sin. If the case be doubtful, and the person not to be persuaded, it seemeth best to leave the matter unto God, and not forcibly to detain him.

Rom. xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 22. Acts, xxi. 14.

4. Just reasons for a member's removal of himself from the church, are, 1. If a man cannot continue without partaking in sin. 2. In case of personal persecution; so Paul departed from the disciples at Damascus. Also in case of general persecution, when all are scattered. 3. In case of real, and not only pretended want of competent subsistence, a door being opened for better supply in another place, together with the means of spiritual

edification. In these, or like cases, a member may lawfully remove, and the church cannot lawfully detain him.

Eph. v. 11. Acts, ix. 25, 29, 30, and viii. 1. Neh. xiii. 20.

5. To separate from a church, either out of contempt of their holy fellowship, or out of covetousness, or for greater enlargements, with just grief to the church; or out of schism, or want of love, and out of a spirit of contention in respect of some unkindness, or some evil only conceived, or indeed in the church, which might and should be tolerated and healed with a spirit of meekness, and of which evil the church is not yet convinced (though perhaps himself be) nor admonished: for these or like reasons to withdraw from public communion, in word, or seals, or censures, is unlawful and sinful.

2 Tim iv. 10. Rom. xvi. 17. Jude, 19. Eph. iv. 2, 3. Col. iii. 13. Gal. vi. 1, 2.

6. Such members as have orderly removed their habitation, ought to join themselves unto the church in order where they do inhabit, if it may be; otherwise they can neither perform the duties nor receive the privileges of members. Such an example tolerated in some, is apt to corrupt others, which if many should follow, would threaten the dissolution and confusion of churches, contrary to the scripture.

Isa. lvi. 8. Acts, ix. 26. 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

7. Order requires, that a member thus removing, have letters testimonial, and of dismission from the church whereof he yet is, unto the church whereunto he desireth to be joined, lest the church should be deluded; that the church may receive him in faith, and not be corrupted by receiving deceivers, and false brethren. Until the person dismissed be received into another church, he ceaseth not by his letters of dismission to be a member of the church whereof he was. The church cannot make a member no member, but by excommunication.

Acts, xviii. 27.

8. If a member be called to remove only for a time, where a church is, letters of recommendation are requisite, and sufficient for communion with that church, in the ordinances, and in their watch; as Phœbe, a servant

of the church at Cenchrea, had letters written for her to the church at Rome, that she might be received as becometh saints.

Rom. xvi. 1, 2. 2 Cor. iii. 1.

9. Such letters of recommendation and dismission, were written for Apollos; for Marcus to the Colossians; for Phœbe to the Romans; for sundry others to other churches. And the apostle telleth us, that some persons, not sufficiently known otherwise, have special need of such letters, though he for his part had no need thereof. The use of them is to be a benefit and help to the party for whom they are written, and for the furthering of his receiving amongst the saints in the place whereto he goeth, and the due satisfaction of them in their receiving of him.

Acts, xviii. 27. Col. iv. 10. Rom. xvi. 1. 2 Cor. iii. 1.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of excommunication, and other censures.

1. The censures of the church are appointed by Christ for the preventing, removing, and healing of offences in the church; for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for the deterring of others from the like offences; for purging out the leaven which may infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honor of Christ, and of his church, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing of the wrath of God, that may justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

1 Tim. v. 10. Deut. xvii. 12, 13. Jude, v. 29. Deut. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. v. 6. Rom. ii. 24. Rev. ii. 14, 15, 16, 20.

2. If an offence be private, one brother offending another, the offender is to go and acknowledge his repentance for it unto his offended brother, who is then to forgive him; but if the offender neglect or refuse to do it,

the brother offended is to go, and convince and admonish him of it, between themselves privately: if thereupon the offender be brought to repent of his offence, the admonisher hath won his brother; but if the offender hear not his brother, the brother offended is to take with him one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established—whether the word of admonition, if the offender receive it; or the word of complaint, if he refuse it: for if he refuse it, the offended brother is by the mouth of the elders to tell the church; and if he hear the church, and declare the same by penitent confession, he is recovered and gained: and if the church discern him to be willing to hear, yet not fully convinced of his offence, as in case of heresy, they are to dispense to him a public admonition; which declaring the offender to lie under the public offence of the church, doth thereby withhold or suspend him from the holy fellowship of the Lord's supper, till his offence be removed by penitent confession. If he still continue obstinate, they are to cast him out by excommunication.

Mat. v. 23, 24. Luke, xvii. 3, 4. Mat. xviii. 15–17. Tit. iii. 10. Mat. xviii. 17.

3. But if the offence be more public at first, and of a more heinous and criminal nature, to wit, such as are condemned by the light of nature; then the church, without such gradual proceeding, is to cast out the offender from their holy communion, for the further mortifying of his sin, and the healing of his soul in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 11.

4. In dealing with an offender, great care is to be taken that we be neither over strict or rigorous, nor too indulgent or remiss: our proceeding herein ought to be with a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted; and that the best of us have need of much forgiveness from the Lord. Yet the winning and healing of the offender's soul, being the end of these endeavors, we must not daub with untempered mortar, nor heal the wounds of our brethren slightly. On some have compassion, others save with fear.

Gal. vi. 1. Mat. xviii. 34, 35. Ezek. xiii. 10.

5. While the offender remains excommunicate, the church is to refrain from all member-like communion with him in spiritual things, and also from all familiar communion with him in civil things, further than the necessity of natural, or domestical, or civil relations do require; and are therefore to forbear to eat and drink with him, that he may be ashamed.

Mat. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.

6. Excommunication being a spiritual punishment, it doth not prejudice the excommunicate in, nor deprive him of his civil rights, and therefore toucheth not princes, or other magistrates, in point of their civil dignity or authority; and, the excommunicate being but as a publican and a heathen, heathens being lawfully permitted to come to hear the word in church assemblies, we acknowledge therefore the like liberty of hearing the word, may be permitted to persons excommunicate, that is permitted unto heathen. And because we are not without hope of his recovery, we are not to account him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother.

1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 2 Thess. iii. 14.

7. If the Lord sanctify the censure to the offender, so as by the grace of Christ he doth testify his repentance, with humble confession of his sin, and judging of himself, giving glory unto God; the church is then to forgive him, and to comfort him, and to restore him to the wonted brotherly communion, which formerly he enjoyed with them.

2 Cor. ii. 7, 8.

8. The suffering of profane or scandalous livers to continue in fellowship, and partake in the sacraments, is doubtless a great sin in those that have power in their hands to redress it, and do it not. Nevertheless, inasmuch as Christ and his apostles in their times, and the prophets and other godly in theirs, did lawfully partake of the Lord's commanded ordinances in the Jewish church, and neither taught nor practised separation from the same, though unworthy ones were permitted therein; and inasmuch as the faithful in the church of Corinth, wherein were many unworthy persons and practices, are never

commanded to absent themselves from the sacraments, because of the same; therefore the godly in like cases are not presently to separate.

Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. Mat. xxiii. 3. Acts, iii. 1. 1 Cor. vi., and xv. 12.

9. As separation from such a church wherein profane and scandalous persons are tolerated, is not presently necessary; so for the members thereof, otherwise unworthy, hereupon to abstain from communicating with such a church in the participation of the sacraments, is unlawful. For as it were unreasonable for an innocent person to be punished for the faults of others, wherein he hath no hand, and whereunto he gave no consent; so it is more unreasonable, that a godly man should neglect duty, and punish himself, in not coming for his portion in the blessing of the seals as he ought, because others are suffered to come that ought not; especially, considering that himself doth neither consent to their sins, nor to their approaching to the ordinance in their sin, nor to the neglect of others who should put them away, and do not; but on the contrary doth heartily mourn for these things, modestly and seasonably stir up others to do their duty. If the church cannot be reformed, they may use their liberty as is specified, chap. 13, sect. 4. But this all the godly are bound unto, even every one to do his endeavor, according to his power and place, that the unworthy may be duly proceeded against, by the church to whom this matter doth appertain.

2 Chro. xxx. 18. Gen. xviii. 25. Ezek. ix. 4.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the communion of churches one with another.

1. Although churches be distinct, and therefore may not be confounded one with another; and equal, and therefore have not dominion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve church communion one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only

as a mystical, but as a political head, whence is derived a communion suitable thereunto.

Rev. i 4. Cant. viii. 8. Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. Acts, xv. 23. Rev. ii. 1.

2. The communion of churches is exercised sundry ways. 1. By way of mutual care, in taking thought for one another's welfare. 2. By way of consultation one with another, when we have occasion to require the judgment and counsel of other churches, touching any person or cause wherewith they may be better acquainted than ourselves. As the church of Antioch consulted with the apostles and elders of the church at Jerusalem, about the question of circumcision of the Gentiles, and about the false teachers that broached that doctrine. In which case, when any church wanteth light or peace amongst themselves, it is a way of communion of churches, according to the word, to meet together by their elders and other messengers in a synod, to consider and argue the points in doubt or difference; and having found out the way of truth and peace, to commend the same by their letters and messengers to the churches whom the same may concern. But if a church be rent with divisions amongst themselves, or lie under any open scandal, and yet refuse to consult with other churches, for healing or removing of the same; it is matter of just offence both to the Lord Jesus, and to other churches, as bewraying too much want of mercy and faithfulness, not to seek to bind up the breaches and wounds of the church and brethren: and therefore the state of such a church calleth aloud upon other churches, to exercise a fuller act of brotherly communion, to wit, by way of admonition. 3. A third way then of communion of churches, is by way of admonition; to wit, in case any public offence be found in a church, which they either discern not, or are slow in proceeding to use the means for the removing and healing of. Paul had no authority over Peter, yet when he saw Peter not walking with a right foot, he publicly rebuked him before the church. Though churches have no more authority one over another, than one apostle had over another, yet as one apostle might admonish another, so may one church admonish another, and yet without usurpation. In which case, if the church that lieth under

offence, do not hearken to the church that doth admonish her, the church is to acquaint other neighbor churches with that offence which the offending church still lieth under, together with their neglect of their brotherly admonition given unto them; whereupon those other churches are to join in seconding the admonition formerly given; and if still the offending church continue in obstinacy and impenitency, they may forbear communion with them, and are to proceed to make use of the help of a synod, or council of neighbor churches walking orderly (if a greater cannot conveniently be had) for their conviction. If they hear not the synod, the synod having declared them to be obstinate, particular churches approving and accepting the judgment of the synod, are to declare the sentence of non-communion respectively concerning them; and thereupon, out of religious care to keep their own communion pure, they may justly withdraw themselves from participation with them at the Lord's table, and from such other acts of holy communion, as the communion of churches doth otherwise allow and require. Nevertheless, if any members of such a church as liveth under public offence, do not consent to the offence of the church, but do in due sort bear witness against it, they are still to be received to wonted communion; for it is not equal that the innocent should suffer with the offensive. Yea, furthermore, if such innocent members, after due waiting in the use of all good means for the healing of the offence of their own church, shall at last, with the allowance of the council of neighbor churches, withdraw from the fellowship of their own church, and offer themselves to the fellowship of another, we judge it lawful for the other church to receive them (being otherwise fit) as if they had been orderly dismissed to them from their own church. 4. A fourth way of communion of churches is by way of participation. The members of one church occasionally coming unto another, we willingly admit them to partake with us at the Lord's table, it being the seal of our communion, not only with Christ, nor only with the members of our own church, but also of all the churches of the saints; in which regard, we refuse not to baptize their children presented to us, if either their own minister be absent, or

such a fruit of holy fellowship be desired with us. In like case such churches as are furnished with more ministers than one, do willingly afford one of their own ministers to supply the place of an absent or sick minister of another church for a needful season. 5. A fifth way of church communion is by way of recommendation, when the member of one church hath occasion to reside in another church, if but for a season, we commend him to their watchful fellowship by letters of recommendation; but if he be called to settle his abode there, we commit him according to his desire, to the fellowship of their covenant, by letters of dismission. 6. A sixth way of church communion is, in case of *need*, to minister relief and succor one unto another, either of able members, to furnish them with officers, or of outward support, to the necessities of poorer churches, as did the churches of the Gentiles contribute liberally to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Cant. viii. 8. Acts, xv. 2, 6, 22, 23. Ezek. xxxiv. 4. Gal. ii. 11—14. Matt. xviii 15, 16, 17, by proportion. Gen. xviii. 25. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. xvi. 1. Acts, xviii. 27, and xi. 22, 29. Rom. xiii. 26, 27.

3. When a company of believers purpose to gather into church fellowship, it is requisite for their safer proceeding, and the maintaining of the communion of churches, that they signify their intent unto the neighbor churches, walking according unto the order of the gospel, and desire their presence, and help, and right hand of fellowship, which they ought readily to give unto them, when there is no just cause to except against their proceedings.

Gal. ii. 1, 2, and 9, by proportion.

4. Besides these several ways of communion, there is also a way of propagation of churches: when a church shall grow too numerous, it is a way, and fit season, to propagate one church out of another, by sending forth such of their members as are willing to remove, and to procure some officers to them, as may enter with them into church estate amongst themselves. As bees, when the hive is too full, issue forth by swarms, and are gathered into other hives; so the churches of Christ may do the same upon like necessity; and therein hold forth to them the right hand of fellowship, both in their gathering into a church, and in the ordination of their officers.

Isa. xl. 20. Cant. viii. 8, 9.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of synods.

1. Synods orderly assembled, and rightly proceeding according to the pattern, Acts 15, we acknowledge as the ordinance of Christ: and though not absolutely necessary to the being, yet many times, through the iniquity of men, and perverseness of times, necessary to the well-being of churches, for the establishment of truth and peace therein.

Acts, xv. 2–15.

2. Synods being spiritual and ecclesiastical assemblies, are therefore made up of spiritual and ecclesiastical causes. The next efficient cause of them under Christ, is the power of the churches, sending forth their elders and other messengers, who being met together in the name of Christ, are the matter of a synod; and they in arguing, debating, and determining matters of religion according to the word, and publishing the same to the churches it concerneth, do put forth the proper and formal acts of a synod, to the conviction of errors and heresies, and the establishment of truth and peace in the churches, which is the end of a synod.

Acts, xv. 2, 3, 6, 7–23, 31, and xvi. 4, 15.

3. Magistrates have power to call a synod, by calling to the churches to send forth their elders and other messengers, to counsel and assist them in matters of religion; but yet the constituting of a synod, is a church-act, and may be transacted by the churches, even when civil magistrates may be enemies to churches, and to church assemblies.

2 Chron. xxix. 4, 5–11. Acts, xv.

4. It belongeth unto synods and councils, to debate and determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to clear from the word holy directions for the holy worship of God, and good government of the church; to bear witness against mal-administration and corruption in doctrine or manners in any particular church; and to give directions for the reformation thereof: not to exercise

church censures in way of discipline, nor any other act of church authority or jurisdiction, which that presidential synod did forbear.

Acts, xv. 1, 2, 6, 7. 1 Chron. xv. 13. 2 Chron. xxix. 6, 7. Acts, xv. 24, 23, 29.

5. The synod's directions and determinations, so far as consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement therewith, (which is the principal ground thereof, and without which they bind not at all,) but also secondarily for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his word.

Acts, xv.

6. Because it is difficult, if not impossible, for many churches to come together in one place, in all their members universally; therefore they may assemble by their delegates or messengers, as the church of Antioch went not all to Jerusalem, but some select men for that purpose. Because none are or should be more fit to know the state of the churches, nor to advise of ways for the good thereof, than elders; therefore it is fit that in the choice of the messengers for such assemblies, they have special respect unto such: yet inasmuch as not only Paul and Barnabas, but certain others also were sent to Jerusalem from Antioch, and when they were come to Jerusalem, not only the apostles and elders, but other brethren also do assemble and meet about the matter; therefore synods are to consist both of elders, and other church members, endued with gifts, and sent by the churches, not excluding the presence of any brethren in the churches.

Acts, xv. 2, 22, 23.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the civil magistrate's power in matters ecclesiastical.

1. It is lawful, profitable, and necessary for Christians to gather themselves into church estate, and therein to exercise all the ordinances of Christ, according

unto the word, although the consent of the magistrate could not be had thereunto; because the apostles and Christians in their time did frequently thus practice, when the magistrates being all of them Jewish or pagan, and most persecuting enemies, would give no countenance or consent to such matters.

Acts, ii. 41, 47, and iv. 1—3.

2. Church government stands in no opposition to civil government of commonwealths, nor any way intrencheth upon the authority of civil magistrates in their jurisdiction; nor any whit weakeneth their hands in governing, but rather strengtheneth them, and furthereth the people in yielding more hearty and conscionable obedience unto them, whatsoever some ill affected persons to the ways of Christ have suggested, to alienate the affections of kings and princes from the ordinances of Christ; as if the kingdom of Christ in his church could not rise and stand, without the falling and weakening of their government, which is also of Christ: whereas the contrary is most true, that they may both stand together and flourish, the one being helpful unto the other, in their distinct and due administrations.

John, xviii. 36. Acts, xxv. 8. Isa. xlix. 23.

3. The power and authority of magistrates is not for the restraining of churches, or any other good works, but for helping in and furthering thereof; and therefore the consent and countenance of magistrates, when it may be had, is not to be slighted, or lightly esteemed; but on the contrary, it is part of that honor due to Christian magistrates, to desire and crave their consent and approbation therein; which being obtained, the churches may then proceed in their way with much more encouragement and comfort.

Rom. xiii. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 2.

4. It is not in the power of magistrates to compel their subjects to become church members, and to partake at the Lord's table; for the priests are reproved that brought unworthy ones into the sanctuary: Then as it was unlawful for the priest, so it is as unlawful to be done by civil magistrates. Those whom the church is to cast out if they

were in, the magistrate ought not to thrust them into the church, nor to hold them therein.

Ezek. xliv. 7, 9. 1 Cor. v. 11.

5. As it is unlawful for church officers to meddle with the sword of the magistrate, so it is unlawful for the magistrate to meddle with the work proper to church officers. The acts of Moses and David, who were not only princes, but prophets, were extraordinary, therefore not imitable. Against such usurpation, the Lord witnessed, by smiting Uzziah with leprosy, for presuming to offer incense.

Matt. ii. 25, 26. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 17.

6. It is the duty of the magistrate to take care of matters of religion, and to improve his civil authority for the observing of the duties commanded in the first, as well as for observing of the duties commanded in the second table. They are called gods. The end of the magistrate's office, is not only the quiet and peaceable life of the subject in matters of righteousness and honesty, but also in matters of godliness, yea, of all godliness. Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, are much commended by the Holy Ghost, for the putting forth their authority in matters of religion: on the contrary, such kings as have been failing this way, are frequently taxed and reproved by the Lord. And not only the kings of Judah, but also Job, Nehemiah, the king of Nineveh, Darius, Artaxerxes, Nebuchadnezzar, whom none looked at as types of Christ, (though were it so, there were no place for any just objection,) are commended in the book of God, for exercising their authority this way.

Psalm lxxxii. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. 1 Kings, xv. 14, and xxii. 43. 2 Kings, xii. 3, and xiv. 4, and xv. 35. 1 Kings, xx. 42. Job, xxix. 25, and xxxi. 26, 28. Neh. xiii. Jonah, iii. 7. Ezra, vii. Dan. iii. 29.

7. The object of the power of the magistrate are not things merely inward, and so not subject to his cognizance and view, as unbelief, hardness of heart, erroneous opinions not vented, but only such things as are acted by the outward man; neither is their power to be exercised in commanding such acts of the outward man, and punishing the neglect thereof, as are but mere inventions and

devices of men; but about such acts as are commanded and forbidden in the word; yea, such as the word doth clearly determine, though not always clearly to the judgment of the magistrate or others, yet clearly in itself. In these he of right ought to put forth his authority, though oft-times actually he doth it not.

1 Kings, xx. 28, 42.

8. Idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, venting corrupt and pernicious opinions that destroy the foundation, open contempt of the word preached, profanation of the Lord's day, disturbing the peaceable administration and exercise of the worship and holy things of God, and the like, are to be restrained and punished by civil authority.

Deut. xiii. 1 Kings, xx. 28, 42. Dan. iii. 29. Zech. xiii. 3. Neh. xiii. 31. 1 Tim. ii. 2. Rom. xiii. 4.

9. If any church, one or more, shall grow schismatical, rending itself from the communion of other churches, or shall walk incorrigibly or obstinately in any corrupt way of their own, contrary to the rule of the word; in such case the magistrate is to put forth his coercive power, as the matter shall require. The tribes on this side Jordan intended to make war against the other tribes, for building the altar of witness, whom they suspected to have turned away therein from following of the Lord.

Josh. xxii.

A

CONFESSION OF FAITH,

Owned and consented unto by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches assembled at Boston in New England,

MAY 12, 1680,

BEING THE SECOND SESSION OF THAT SYNOD.

PREFACE.

The Lord Jesus Christ witnessed a good confession, at the time when he said, To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; and he taketh notice of it, to the praise and high commendation of the church in Pergamos, that they held fast his name, and had not denied his faith. Nor are they worthy of the name of Christians, who, though the Lord by his providence call them publicly to own the truth they have professed, shall nevertheless refuse to declare what they believe, as to those great and fundamental principles in the doctrine of Christ, the knowledge whereof is necessary unto salvation. We find how ready the Apostle was to make a confession of his faith; though for that hope's sake he was accused and put in chains. And the Martyrs of Jesus, who have laid down their lives in bearing witness to the truth, against the infidelity, idolatry, heresy, apostasy of the world, when Pagan, Arian, or overspread with Popish darkness: Having their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, were free and forward in their testimony, confessing the truth, yea, sealing it with their blood. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Rom. x. 10. Nor is there a greater evidence of being in a state of salvation, than such a confession, if made in times or places where men are exposed to utmost suffering upon that account. 1 John, iv. 15. And if confession of faith be, in some cases, of such importance and necessity, as hath been expressed; it must needs be in itself, a work pleasing in the sight of God, for his servants to declare unto the world, what those principles of truth are,

which they have received, and are (by the help of Christ) purposed to live and die in the stedfast profession of. Some of the Lord's worthies have been of renown among his people in this respect; especially Iræneus and Athanasius of old, and of latter times Beza, all whose (not to mention others) confessions, with the advantage which the church of God hath received thereby, are famously known.

And it must needs tend much to the honor of the dear and blessed name of the Lord Jesus, in case many churches do join together in their testimony. How signally the Lord hath owned the confession of the four general Synods or Councils for the suppression of the heresies of those times, needs not to be said, since no man can be ignorant thereof, that hath made it his concern to be acquainted with things of this nature. The confession of the Bohemians, of the Waldenses, and of the reformed Protestant churches abroad, all these have been of singular use, not only to those that lived in the ages when these declarations were emitted, but unto posterity, yea, unto this day.

There have been some who have reflected upon these New-English churches, for our defect in this matter, as if our principles were unknown; whereas it is well known, that as to matters of doctrine, we agree with other reformed churches: nor was it that, but what concerns worship and discipline, that caused our fathers to come into this wilderness, while it was a land not sown, that so they might have liberty to practice accordingly. And it is a ground of holy rejoicing before the Lord, that now there is no advantage left for those that may be disaffected towards us, to object any thing of that nature against us. For it hath pleased the only wise God so to dispose in his providence, as that the elders and messengers of the churches in the colony of the Massachusetts in New-England, did, by the call and encouragement of the honored general Court, meet together Sept. 10, 1679. This Synod at their second session, which was May 12, 1680, consulted and considered of a Confession of Faith. That which was consented unto by the elders and messengers of the Congregational churches in England, who met at the Savoy, (being for the most part, some small variations excepted, the same with that which was agreed

upon first by the Assembly at Westminster, and was approved of by the Synod at Cambridge in New-England, anno 1648, as also by a general assembly in Scotland,) was twice publicly read, examined and approved of: that little variation which we have made from the one, in compliance with the other, may be seen by those who please to compare them. But we have (for the main) chosen to express ourselves in the words of those reverend assemblies, that so we might not only with one heart, but with one mouth glorify God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

As to what concerns church-government, we refer to the Platform of Discipline agreed upon by the messengers of these churches anno 1648, and solemnly owned and confirmed by the late Synod.

What hours of temptation may overtake these churches, is not for us to say. Only the Lord doth many times so order things, that when his people have made a good confession, they shall be put upon the trial one way or other, to see whether they have (or who among them hath not) been sincere in what they have done. The Lord grant that the loins of our minds may be so girt about with truth, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Holy Scriptures.

Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly to writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

II. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are these:

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, the Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 to Timothy, 2 to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the first and second Epistles of Peter, the first, second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, the Revelation.

All which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

III. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of, than other human writings.

IV. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church, to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

VI. The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumina-

tion of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word: and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of writing of it was most generally known to the nations) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them; therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places, that speak more clearly.

X. The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other, but the holy Scripture delivered

by the Spirit; into which Scripture so delivered, our Faith is finally resolved.

CHAPTER II.

Of God and of the Holy Trinity.

THERE is but one only living and true God; who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and withal, most just and terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in, and of himself, and is alone in, and unto himself, all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things: and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth: in his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience, as creatures, they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the God-head there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotton, nor proceeding; the

Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. Which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence upon him.

CHAPTER III.

Of God's eternal Decree.

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will foreordained all the means thereunto: wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted,

sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination, is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Creation.

It pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom and goodness, in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

II. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their heart, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

CHAPTER V.

Of Providence.

God the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest even unto the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and mercy.

II. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and the infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, in that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, (and that not by a bare permission,) which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold dispensation, to his own most holy ends, yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth ofttimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled, and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God

as a righteous judge for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

VII. As the providence of God doth in general reach to all creatures, so after a most special manner it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things for the good thereof.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.

God having made a covenant of works and life thereupon, with our first parents, and all their posterity in them, they being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, did wilfully transgress the law of their creation, and break the covenant in eating the forbidden fruit.

II. By this sin they, and we in them, fell from original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root, and by God's appointment standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

V. This corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal.

CHAPTER VII.

Of God's Covenant with Man.

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.

II. The first covenant made with man, was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man by his fall having made himself uncapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.

IV. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in scripture by the name of a testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V. Although this covenant hath been differently and variously administered, in respect of ordinances and institutions in the time of the law, and since the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet for the substance and efficacy of

it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is one and the same ; upon the account of which various dispensations, it is called the Old and New Testament.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of Christ, the Mediator.

It pleased God in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus his only begotten Son, according to a covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man : the prophet, priest and king, the head and saviour of his church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world : unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance : so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion ; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

III. The Lord Jesus in his human nature, thus united to the divine in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety ; which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who also put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

IV. This office the Lord Jesus Christ did most willingly undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us, enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption, on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

V. The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy and benefits thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to-day the same, and forever.

VII. Christ in the work of mediation acteth according to both natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation, effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his

almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Free-will.

God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to do good or evil.

II. Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation, so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only.

CHAPTER X.

Of Effectual Calling.

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted

time, effectually to call by his word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh, renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth: so also are all other elect persons, who are uncapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

IV. Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither do nor can come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess: and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Justification.

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in

them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto the whole law, and passive obedience in his sufferings and death, for their whole and sole righteousness, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

II. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ, and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.

III. Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, real and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf; yet inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

IV. God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did in the fullness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified personally, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure: and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

VI. The justification of believers under the Old Testament, was in all these respects one and the same with the justification of believers under the New Testament.

CHAPTER XII.

Of Adoption.

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth in and for his only Son Jesus Christ to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have his name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of Sanctification.

They that are effectually called and regenerated, being united to Christ, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also further sanctified really and personally through the same virtue, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them, the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life, there abide still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

III. In which war, although the remaining corruption

for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome, and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of Saving Faith.

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word; by which also, and by the administration of the seals, prayer and other means, it is increased and strengthened.

II. By this faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

III. This faith, although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other saving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, though it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation.

Such of the elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling, giveth them repentance unto life.

II. Whereas there is none that doeth good, and sinneth not, and the best of men may through the power and deceitfulness of their corruptions dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath in the covenant of grace mercifully provided, that believers so sinning and falling, be renewed through repentance unto salvation.

III. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person being by the Holy Ghost made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth by faith in Christ humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose and endeavor by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well pleasing in all things.

IV. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof; so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins, particularly.

V. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of grace, for the preservation of believers unto salvation, that although there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation, yet there is no sin so great, that it shall bring damnation, on them who truly repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Good Works.

Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.

II. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith, and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end eternal life.

III. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ: and that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

IV. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much, which in duty they are bound to do.

V. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them, and the glory to come; and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sin; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good, they proceed

from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.

VI. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprovable in God's sight, but that he looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

VII. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and to others; yet because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Perseverance of the Saints.

They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. And though they may through the temptation of Satan, and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves; yet they are and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.

Although temporary believers, and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish, yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

II. This certainly is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the gospel, and also upon the inward evidence of those graces, unto which promises are made, and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.

III. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means

attain thereunto; and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished and intermitted, as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light; yet are they neither utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which in the mean time they are supported from utter despair.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the Law of God.

God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

II. This law, so written in the heart, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall of man, and was delivered by God on Mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the four first commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III. Beside this law commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings and benefits, and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties: all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only lawgiver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away.

IV. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now by virtue of that institution, their general equity only being still of moral use.

V. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it: neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

VI. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God, and their duty, and directs and binds them to walk accordingly, discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin, and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it in like manner show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works; so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God revealed in the law required to be done.

CHAPTER XX.

Of the Gospel, and of the Extent of the Grace thereof.

The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give unto the elect the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling them, and begetting in them faith and repentance. In this promise, the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

II. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only in and by the word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of him by the promise or gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.

III. The revelation of the gospel unto sinners made in divers times, and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did make, or can so do: and therefore in all ages the preaching of the gospel hath been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straightening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.

IV. Although the gospel be the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abun-

dantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses, may be born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual, irresistible work of the Holy Ghost upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life, without which no other means are sufficient for their conversion unto God.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.

The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigor and curse of the law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind: all which were common also to believers under the law, for the substance of them, but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, the whole legal administration of the covenant of grace, to which the Jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it; so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience, and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

III. They who upon pretence of Christian liberty do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, as they do thereby

pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, so they wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of Religious Worship, and of the Sabbath Day.

The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is just, good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and all the soul, and with all the might; but the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

II. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creature; and since the fall, not without a Mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

III. Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of natural worship, is by God required of all men; but that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love and perseverance: and when with others in a known tongue.

IV. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

V. The reading of the Scriptures, preaching and hear-

ing of the word of God, singing of psalms, as also the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience unto God, with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear. Solemn humiliations with fastings, and thanksgiving upon special occasions, are in their several times and seasons to be used in an holy and religious manner.

VI. Neither prayer nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth, as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself, so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calleth thereunto.

VII. As it is of the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time by God's appointment be set apart for the worship of God; so by his word in a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

VIII. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of Lawful Oaths and Vows.

A LAWFUL oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness, and judgment, solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

II. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matters of weight and moment an oath is warranted by the word of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.

III. Whosoever taketh an oath warranted by the word of God, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth: neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing, but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being lawfully imposed by authority.

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation, or mental reservation. It cannot oblige to sin, but in anything not sinful being taken, it binds to performance, although to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics or infidels.

V. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but God alone, is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

VI. Popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Civil Magistrate.

God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people for his own glory and the public good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so for that end they may lawfully now under the New Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasion.

III. They, who upon pretence of Christian liberty shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercises of it, resist the ordinance of God, and for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation, or to the power of godliness, or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate; yet in such differences about the doctrines of the gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, and duly observing the rules of peace and order, there is no warrant for the magistrate to abridge them of their liberty.

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and

legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people, and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of Marriage.

MARRIAGE is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed, and for preventing of uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore such as profess the true reformed religion, should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked by marrying such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word, nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of the Church.

The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

II. The whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, they and their children with them are, and may be called the visible catholic church of Christ, although as such it is not intrusted with any officers to rule or govern over the whole body.

III. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan: nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a visible kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

IV. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

V. As the Lord in his care and love towards his church, hath in his infinite wise providence, exercised it with great variety in all ages for the good of them that love him, and his own glory; so according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken, the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified, through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition, than they have enjoyed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of the Communion of Saints.

All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head by his Spirit and faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory: and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

II. All saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification: as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in families or churches, yet as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by Christ, to represent him and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, and solemnly to engage us to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.

II. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacra-

ments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them, neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

IV. There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the Lord's supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word lawfully called.

V. The sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of Baptism.

Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, to be unto the party baptized a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life; which ordinance is by Christ's own appointment to be continued in his church, until the end of the world.

II. The outward element to be used in this ordinance is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereunto.

III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

IV. Not only those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized, and those only.

V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so insepa-

rably annexed to it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.

VI. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will in his appointed time.

VII. Baptism is but once to be administered to any person.

CHAPTER XXX.

Of the Lord's Supper.

Our Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his churches to the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and showing forth of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.

II. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself upon the cross once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as they call it) is most abominably injurious to Christ's own only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

III. The Lord Jesus hath in this ordinance appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy

use, and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the communicants, but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

IV. Private masses, or receiving the sacrament by a priest, or any other alone, as likewise the denial of the cup to the people, worshipping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

V. The outward elements in this sacrament duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit in substance and nature they still remain truly and only bread and wine as they were before.

VI. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to the scriptures alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is the cause of manifold superstitions, yea, of gross idolatries.

VII. Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine, yet as really, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

VIII. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot without great sin against him, whilst they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea, whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, eating and drinking judgment to themselves.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Of the State of Man after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead.

The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die nor sleep) having an immortal substance, immediately return to God who gave them, the souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day: besides these two places of souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledgeth none.

II. At the last day such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed, and all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall by the power of Christ be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just by his Spirit unto honor, and be made conformable to his own glorious body.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of the Last Judgment.

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given by the Father: in which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient: for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and glory, with everlasting reward in the presence of the Lord, but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* Amen.

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